

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 IO-13 ADP-00 AGR-20 CEA-02 CIAE-00

COME-00 DODE-00 EB-11 FRB-02 H-03 INR-10 INT-08 L-03

LAB-06 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 AID-20 CIEP-02

SS-15 STR-08 TAR-02 TRSE-00 USIA-12 PRS-01 OMB-01

NEA-10 RSR-01 /200 W

----- 074506

R 131030Z JUL 73

FM AMEMBASSY TUNIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2545

INFO USINT ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY RABAT

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

USMISSION OECD PARIS

USMISSION GENEVA

C O N F I D E N T I A L TUNIS 4071

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EC ETRD TS

SUBJECT: REVERSE PREFERENCES FOR MAGHREB

REF: STATE 134654

1. DURING A FAREWELL CALL BY THE DEPARTING CHIEF OF THE EMBASSY'S ECONOMIC AND COMMERCIAL SECTION, THE MINISTER OF NATIONAL ECONOMY CHEDLI AYARI CONFIRMED TO US THAT TUNISIA WOULD MEET WITH THE EC AT THE END OF JULY. CONCERNING REVERSE PREFERENCES, AYARI SAID HIS GOVERNMENT WOULD CONTINUE TO PRESS FOR THEIR ELIMINATION. TUNISIA HAS CONSISTENTLY ARGUED THAT REVERSE PREFERENCES GIVE ITS TIES WITH THE EC A COMMERCIAL TONE AND ARE NOT COMPATIBLE WITH THE SORT OF "ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT"

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AGREEMENT TUNISIA DESIRES. MOROCCO AND ALGERIA SHARE

TUNISIA'S POINT OF VIEW AND WILL OPPOSE REVERSE PREFERENCES.

2. THE MINISTER NOTED HE HAD THE IMPRESSION THAT THE EUROPEANS WOULD NOT INSIST ON REVERSE PREFERENCES. IN RECENT STATEMENTS ON MAGHREB NEGOTIATIONS, EC OFFICIALS ARE NOT LONGER MENTIONING REVERSE PREFERENCES. HE BELIEVES DIFFERENCES OVER FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE WILL BE MORE DIFFICULT TO RESOLVE.

3. AYARI SAID THE GOT WOULD COORDINATE ITS NEGOTIATING POSITION WITH THOSE OF ALGERIA AND MOROCCO. WHILE THAT WAS A STEP IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION, THERE EXISTS SUBSTANTIAL DIFFERENCES IN FORM AND SUBSTANCE BETWEEN EACH GOVERNMENT. TUNISIA FOR EXAMPLE WANTS TALKS WITH THE EC TO OPEN AT MINISTERIAL LEVEL. MOROCCO AGREES; ALGERIA DOES NOT. ALGERIA'S NEGOTIATING POSITION PLACES PRIORITY ON RESOLUTION OF THE WINE ISSUE. MOROCCO IS INTERESTED IN CITRUS. TUNISIA HAS NO MAJOR CONCERNS WITH EITHER PRODUCT AND IS NOT WILLING TO LET RESOLUTION OF ALGERIAN AND MOROCCAN DIFFICULTIES DELAY INTS NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE COMMUNITY.

4. COMMENT: FAREWELL CALL OF WISNER GAVE US EXCELLENT INFORMAL OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE DESIRED DEMARCHE. (REFTEL).

RELPH

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30 JUN 2005

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